

Kern Canyon Slender Salamander

Batrachoseps simatus
Family Plethodontidae



Global Rank: G1G2

State Rank: S2 (CA)

Distribution: Known only from the Kern River drainage in the southern Sierra Nevada (Kern and Tulare Counties) of California. Observed in all successional stages of blue oak savannah, and prefers digger pine-oak types. From 1,400 ft. (430 m.) to 6,300 ft. (1,920 m.) in elevation.

Description: Adults reach a little over 2 in. (5.4 cm.) in snout-vent length. This narrow-headed slender salamander has relatively long limbs and a long body and tail. Total length is about 1 1/2 times the snout-vent length. The head and body are somewhat flattened, suggesting crevice-dwelling habits. There are 20 to 21 costal grooves and 7 to 9 costal folds between the toes of adpressed limbs. A vague dorsal stripe may be present. Sides and under-surfaces are dark, speckled with small light flecks.

Reproduction: Lays eggs in moist places under surface objects. Clutch size is unknown. It is believed to breed from November to February, with peak activity in November.



*Current range of the
Kern Canyon slender salamander*

Food: Diet is small insects and other invertebrates which are searched for under surface objects.

Habits: Occurs in isolated colonies along stream courses and on ridges and hillsides. North-facing slopes and shaded narrow tributary canyons seem to be favored. Found in talus slopes and under logs, litter, other surface objects, and moist soil, especially after rains. Frequents streamside vegetation of willows and cottonwoods, and slopes grown to interior live oak, canyon oak, and pine. Not thought to be territorial. Home ranges about a half acre in size.

Management Implications: Status is rare in California. It was first described in 1968 and little ecological information is available.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Verner, J., and A.S. Boss. 1980. California wildlife and their habitats: western Sierra Nevada. USDA Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, GTR PSW-37, Berkeley, CA.